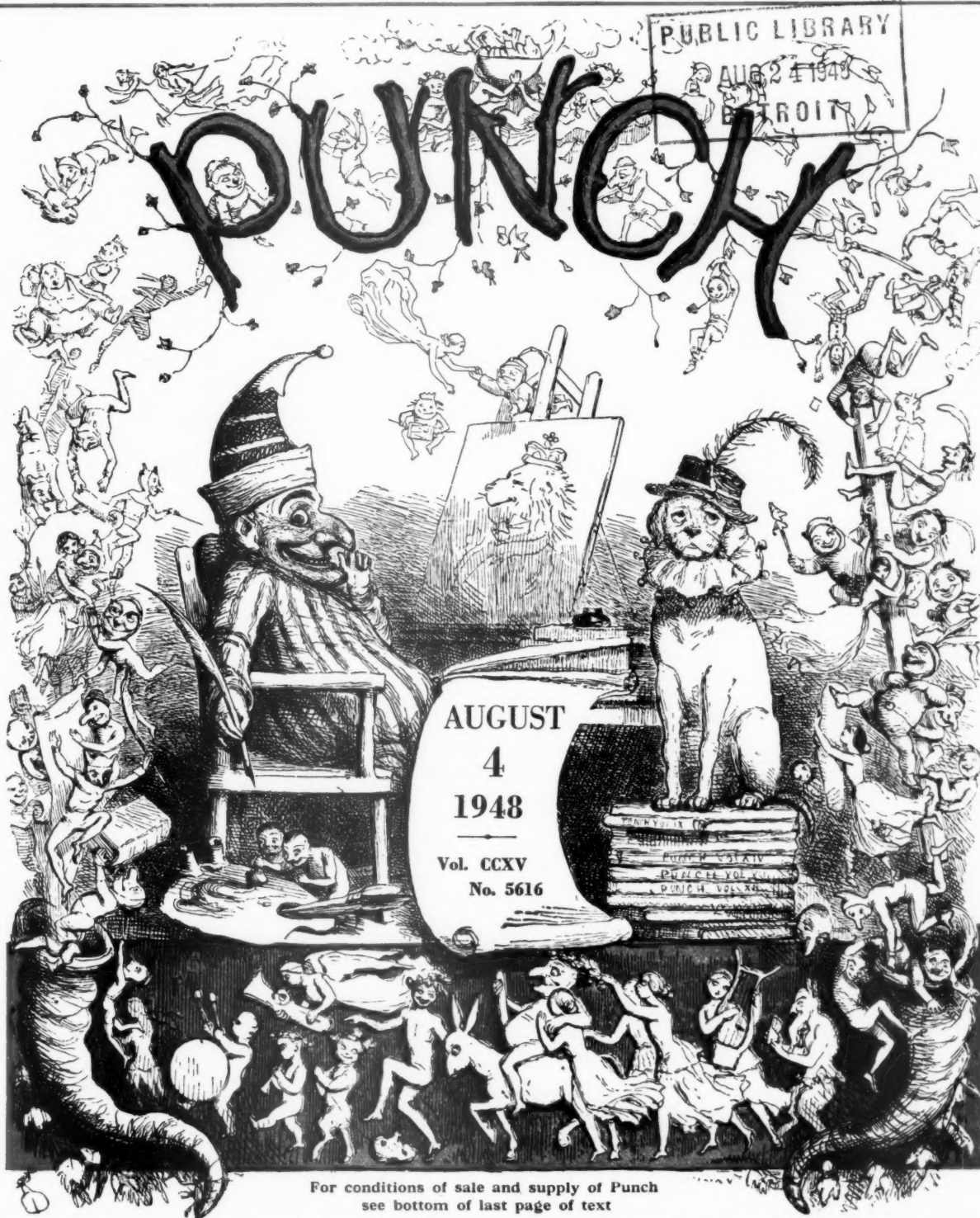


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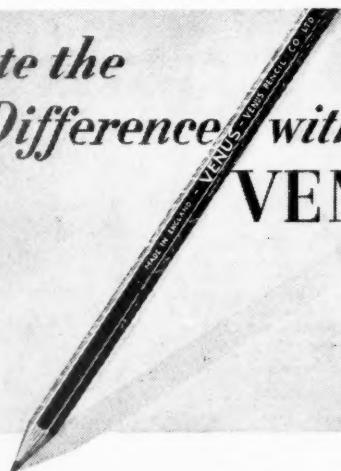


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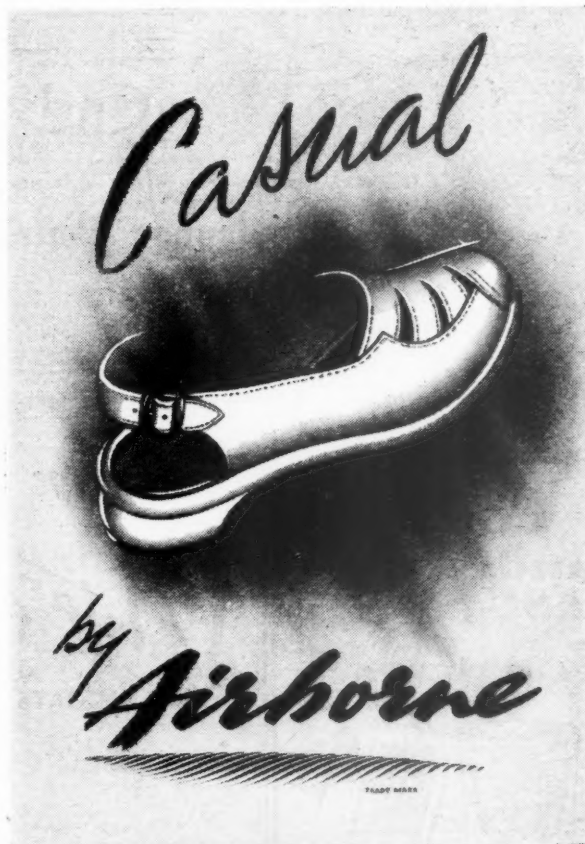


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Punch, August 4 1948



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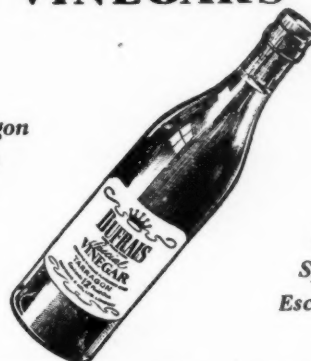
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The fable of the lion who blinked

There was once a Lion who opened his eyes to find himself in a world where nobody professed to believe in British Lions any more. 'You're a fabulous monster,' they told him. At that the Lion lifted his head . . . and everybody stepped back. 'I notice,' he said, 'that initiative is still respected among you. I think I can undertake to remind you of my existence.'

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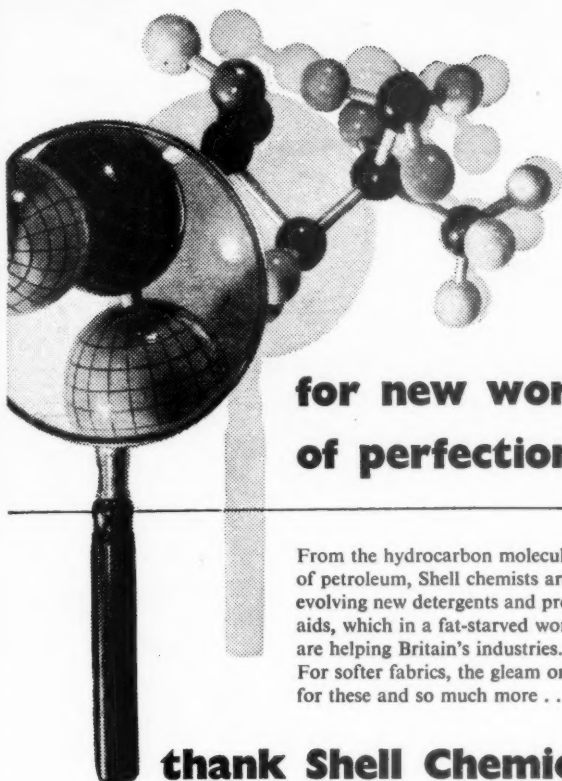


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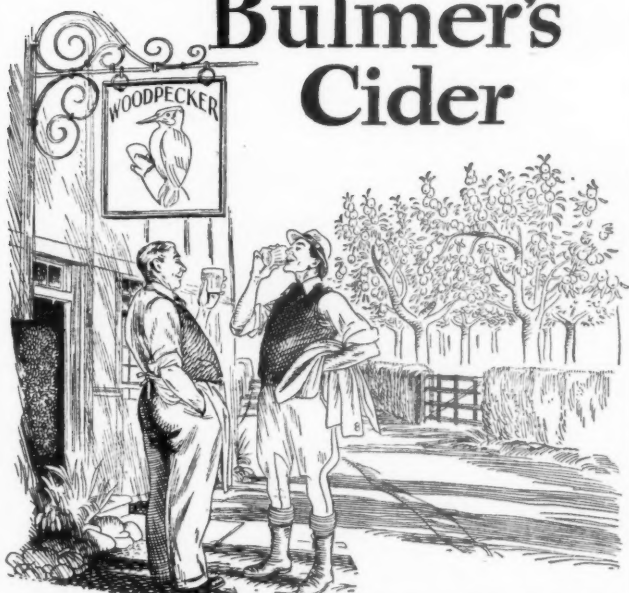
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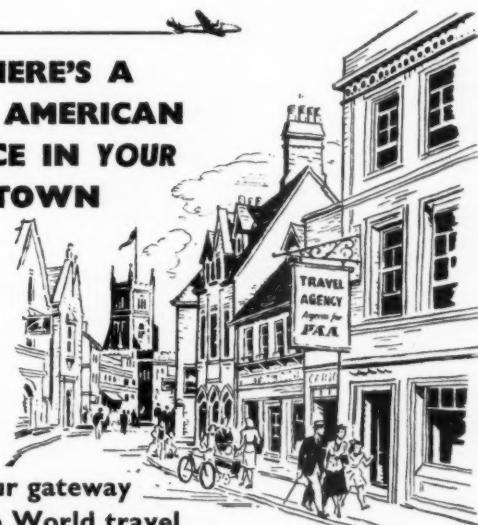
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the luxury of a fast 4-engined Clipper which flies you above the weather—where the air is smooth and the sun shines the whole year round!

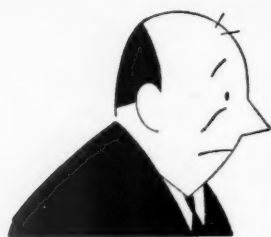
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He's touchy, liverish, "misunderstood."

He needs a course of Benger's Food

When your digestion is out of order, practise what is known as Rest-Therapy — *rest* your digestion for a while and take a course of Benger's Food at night. "Bengers" is rich nourishment, pre-digested. It soon soothes and strengthens the digestion back to normal.

Keep a tin of **BENGER'S** in the house.
From 2/- a tin at all Chemists and Grocers.













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MOTOR MOWERS

are earning much needed foodstuffs from abroad. Atco Owners at home contribute loyally to the "grow more" campaign. This common effort means less new Atco machines and more make-do, but the effort is worth while because the need is vital.

Stones can ruin blades. Shortage of high quality steel makes replacement difficult. Look before you mow!

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GREAT BRITAIN	USA	CANADA
		
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PROUD TRADITION



All the world over there are men who appreciate the indefinable air of good breeding which is in the best English tradition. The Austin 'A125' Sheerline embodies this tradition to the full: skilled engineering, good manners on the road, and that air of quiet assurance — of being just right.

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AUSTIN
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You will be interested in its 4-litre six-cylinder overhead-valve engine and independent front suspension. The lavish equipment includes interior heating and radio with twin speakers.

'A125' Sheerline Saloon £999
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AUSTIN—you can depend on it!



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXV No. 5616

August 4 1948

Charivaria

THE B.B.C received many appreciative letters from the public regarding a recent feature in the Third Programme. The producer fears he is losing his exclusive touch.

The new rubber-wool is said to be very popular with women who knit. It is such a boon when dropped stitches bounce back into position again.



A Wembley correspondent mentions a sudden plague of moths in his district. The local theory is that they have been following in the wake of the Olympic torch.

A railway-guard discovered a snake coiled up under the seat of one of the carriages of his train. As usual it had no ticket.

"Don't plant half-hardy annuals in the autumn," says a gardener, "as they won't survive the winter." Even to survive the summer they don't half have to be hardy.

"My husband, George, and my son are both coalmen, and they come home like sweeps."—"Daily Express." Sweeps, who come home like coalmen, are justifiably annoyed.

A doctor advises the eating of raw green peas, without any dressing. Just bite the end off the pod and inhale.



Owing to the improvement in supplies shopkeepers are now said to be wondering what to do with new razor blades.

Frankness is All.

"Mr. Renton: 'The decision, in effect, is that pigeon racing is to receive a crippling blow.'"

Dr. Summerskill: 'We muts put human beings before racing pigeons.'—*Bristol paper.*

A writer maintains that musicians cannot be paid by results like some other workers. Trombonists of course could be paid so much per foot slidage.

"The village blacksmith used generally to be the strongest smiter in the village cricket-team," a writer reminds us. *Over* the spreading chestnut tree.

New table dishes are made of clear glass. We understand that at one London restaurant diners can see darns on the table-cloth through the soup.

Faint Praise

"The weekly women's meeting was held on Wednesday, presided over by Mrs. Baker. The Rev. J. W. Piper gave the address, and osos were rendered by Mr. B. Lockwood."—*Lincolnshire Standard.*

A young portrait painter declares that it is his ambition to have a picture hung in the Royal Academy. He hopes to persuade the Selection Committee to sit for him in a group.



The Mother of Parliaments

[Mr. Gallacher. I challenge you to put before the House the amount you get from the Press and the amount I do not get. I write more and better than you do. Your pockets are lousy with Press money.
Mr. Brown. It is probable I earn a good deal more, but then I write so much better.]

I SHALL always remember the summer session
Of 1948
The fire and the force of the speakers, the vivid
impression
Of brilliant and sparkling debate.

And the record I think was broken
When Mr. Sumpkin (Member for Wyck)
Immediately after Mr. Pumpkin had spoken
Said: "You are a tick."

Time paused: then swift as a swallow flying
The light-winged answer flew,
Mr. Pumpkin emitted the marvellous phrase: "You are lying,
I am less of a tick than you."

Foeman awhile sat glaring at foeman
But the breathless suspense was short;

Like an arrow from a string of a masterly bowman
Flashed Mr. Sumpkin's retort:

"I accept Mr. Pumpkin's remark as a favour—
We are both of us ticks, it may be,
But I am a better and more beautiful and a braver
And a livelier tick than he."

Thus ended the duel; and the orators of Britain
And Greece and Rome looked down
From the niches where their names in history are written,
And gave Mr. Sumpkin the crown.

They knew the gall mingled with honey,
The wit and the weight they discerned:
And the taxpayer, reading the story, rejoiced that his
money
Was being well earned. EVOE.

The Sign of the Five Rings

IT was easy to tell the man was not an Englishman.
He was too well, or too newly, dressed, for one thing.
For another he spoke some language which an expensive
education enabled me to identify as neither ancient Greek
nor Latin, and certainly not English. It was the kind of
language that has more spit than vowels about it, if I may
so express myself, and seems to lead nowhere.

"Sorry," I said. "I don't get it."

He repeated his question, or so at least I surmise, and I
listened in some amazement. In a fairly wide experience
of being accosted by unintelligible foreigners, I have never
heard a stream of sounds so apparently incapable of
division into words or even sentences. The only impression
I got was of a long viscous snake pouring out of his mouth,
with the last yard or two curled sharply upwards in the form
of a question-mark. But that he was making real words
and sentences in his own tongue I have no doubt at all—if
only because otherwise I do not see how he could have
known when he had got to the right place to stop.

I felt a great desire to be of use to this man. He had a
pleasant, slightly anxious face, and if his hat was a little
wider in the brim and a shade lighter in colour than would
be approved of around St. James's, well—one ought not to
allow considerations of that sort to stand in the way of a
chance to cement the bonds of friendship between this
country and Egypt—shall we say—or perhaps Albania.
Besides, we were nowhere near St. James's; we were at the
corner of the Strand and Villiers Street, a place where a
foreigner might well be excused for wanting encouragement
and advice.

I asked him where he wanted to go. This is a perfectly
safe question to put to a foreigner at almost any time and
place, the chances being overwhelmingly against his wanting
to stay indefinitely just where he is. At the corner of the
Strand and Villiers Street it is cast-iron.

When he spoke again, it seemed to me that somewhere
in the middle of the flood there coagulated, like a lump
in a bowl of half-cooked porridge, the word or sound
"Olympisch." I leapt at it like—well, like a writer
leaping nimbly from one simile to another, or, as some
would say, like a goat.

"Olympisch?"

Sometimes, I know, we imagine that which we wish to
see, but I could swear that something like a ray of hope lit
up his face.

"Olympisch?" I said again, and without doubt he
nodded. I immediately—and, in the event, rightly—
concluded that he wanted to go to the Olympic Games.
That, after all, is what a foreigner may be supposed to
want to do in this country at the present time.

Now a more thoughtless man might perhaps have taken
this lost visitor by the arm and thrust him down the nearest
Underground leading to Wembley. But the fact is that by
no means all the Games are taking place in or about
the Stadium. Rifle-shooting, rowing and equitation, for
instance, take place elsewhere; and it would be tiresome for
him, I thought, if he had come all the way from Bolivia to
see the preliminary heats of the Coxwainless Fours, to be
packed off by a blundering Englishman to the semi-final
of the 3,000 metres steeplechase. I make no apology,
therefore, for attempting to discover, by means of dumb-
show, which particular event he wanted to see.

The statements made later to the police by a woman in
a purple blouse were false and tendentious. "First 'e come
at 'im crouching," she said; "with 'is 'ands out, proper
vicious." This is no way, as even a constable should
have realized, to describe the characteristic posture of a
wrestler in the Greco-Roman style. "Then 'e makes as
if to shoot the gentleman with 'is umbrella, and after
that 'e come on at a run and a jump, so to say, like a
mad thing."

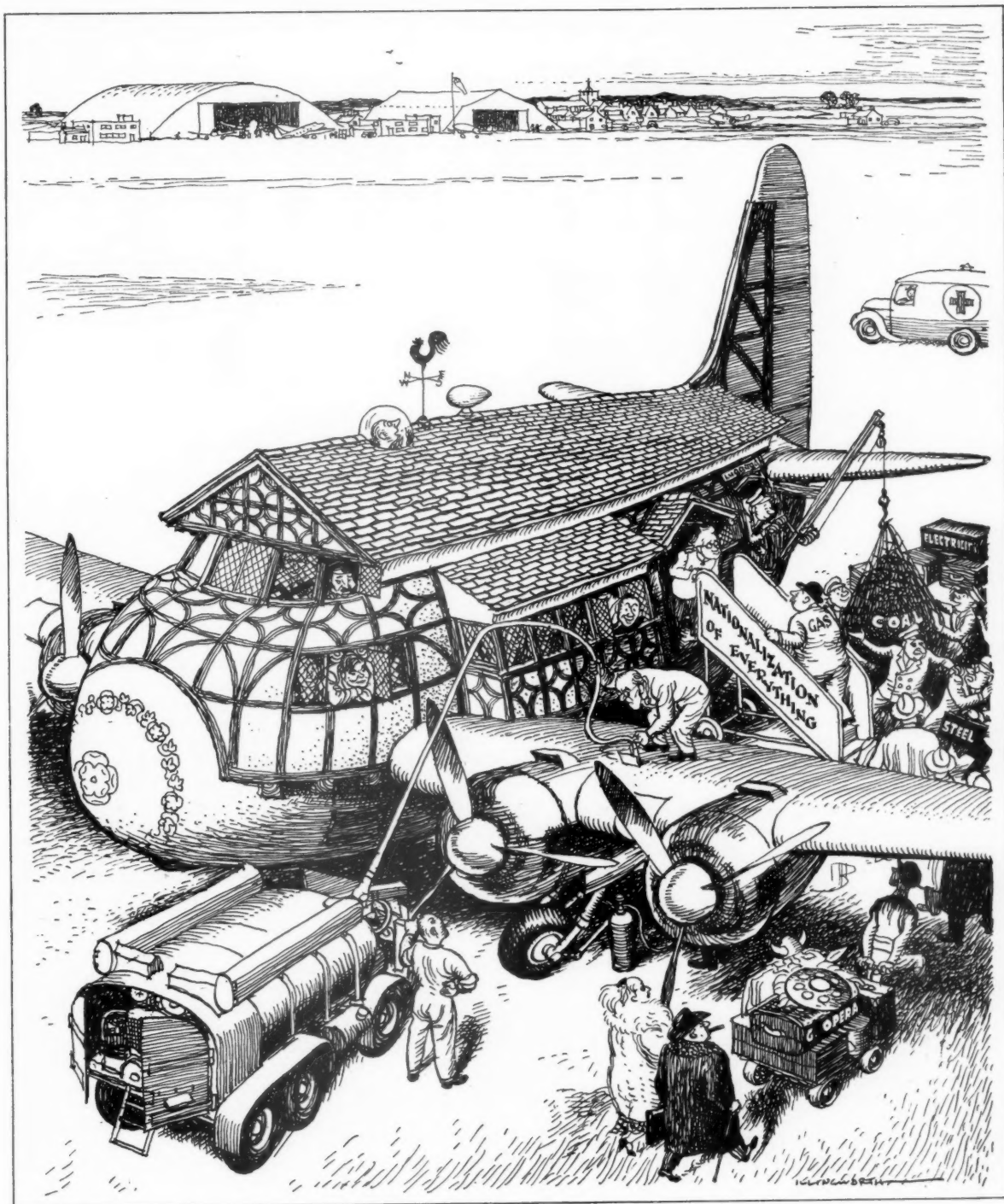
"I seen 'im," put in a bystander.

"There you are, then," said the woman. "Down on all
fours at the finish, as anybody'll tell you."

"'Ere's his brolly in the gutter," a thin bearded man
pointed out keenly. "'E can't get past that."

"What have you got to say about this?" asked the
policeman.

In executing the pole vault the athlete twists his body
in the air at the top of his leap, at the same time thrusting
the pole away from him clear of the bar. The trunk must be
practically horizontal, and for this reason the landing is
apt to be made on all fours rather than on the feet only.
This is particularly the case where the jump is made, with



TUDOR STYLE II



"I don't care how many times I get married, darling—I'll never ask anyone but you to be a bridesmaid."

the aid of an umbrella, on to hard paving-stones. But to explain technical points of this nature to a constable at the corner of Villiers Street and in the presence of a hostile crowd is a waste of valuable time.

"Ask him," I suggested, indicating the stranger.

The stranger, as I had hoped, accepted the constable's invitation to state his case and replied at great length and in his own language; and the crowd, after the fashion of English crowds faced with something they do not understand, drew closer together and began to mutter.

"Orkard sort of talk," said the thin bearded man.

"Polish, by the sound of it," suggested another.

"More spit than Polish, if you ask me," said a third, obviously a man of some culture. But nobody laughed. It is of course a joke that goes better on paper.

The constable took out his notebook, perhaps to gain time. "Foreigner, eh?" he observed, more or less at large.

"You will rise high in your profession, officer," I said, bitterly. "You have instinct and intuition."

"Never mind that," he said. "What's he want—and what do *you* want, come to that?"

I explained that in my view the foreigner wanted to attend the Olympic Games, but *which* game in particular I was unable to say. My own idea had been to try to discover, by the use of dumb-show and gesture, what sport he was anxious to patronize. Perhaps I had been ill-advised. No doubt the lady in the purple blouse could suggest some better way of settling the matter, such as the summoning of additional policemen or the wholesale distribution of accusations of disorderly conduct, whereby a

breach of the peace might have been occasioned. I knew nothing about that. All I had done was to act according to my lights. For myself, I wanted nothing—beyond a speedy end of this ridiculous situation.

"Olympics, eh?" said the constable, going to the heart of the matter.

"Olympisch!" cried the foreigner eagerly. "Olympisch!" And he began to trace great circles in the air with his hands.

"Crikey!" said the woman in the purple blouse. "There's two of 'em."

"You see, officer," I said. "The Sign of the Five Circles."

The policeman turned heavily to the foreigner, and the crowd, losing hope of an arrest, began to melt away.

"There's all sorts of Olympics, sonny," the policeman said tolerantly. "There's rowing and running and jumping and horseback—gee-gees, savvy?—and cycling and a bit of football and lord knows—"

"Fwotba!" cried the foreigner delightedly, and seizing my bowler hat from my hands (I had taken it off at an earlier stage, I remember, with some idea of adopting the attitude of Myron's *Discobolos*), set it on the pavement and kicked it with extraordinary precision under a passing taxi.

"That's it, then," said the constable. "Soccer"; and taking the foreigner by the arm began to lead him away with the obvious intention of thrusting him down the nearest Underground for Wembley.

"Hi!" I said. "What about my hat?"

"You'd better keep that," said the constable, grinning like a fool. "You might meet another of 'em." H. F. E.

Dosvidanya

COMRADE, bring me Popov's Grammar,
let me take a final look,
At the Sickle and the Hammer
on the cover of his book!

Let me read the sweet seduction
that beguiled me in my youth,
Heedless that the Introduction
spoke a little less than truth.

"Though the Russian alphabetic
system may at first seem queer,
Yet, since it is quite phonetic,
the beginner need not fear."

Lesson One. Pronunciation:
O what hints of snobbish joy—
At the slightest provocation
carelessly to say "Tals-toy."

On a New Year's Day I started:
P was R, and B was V.
Febpuapy came. Light-heaped
I assimilated C.

S the Ruccians kall this lettep.
Co did I. Cometime in May
Popov's Grammar went one Bettep
(yes, they have a B, kalled Bay)

And produced from Mathematics
dear old П—pronounced like P,
And, more mental akroBatics,
61—pronounced like EE!

Somehow I curvived Sertember
π6lvish mid the autumn haze;
Then, how klearly I remember,
Aspidistra met my gaze!

Aspidistra X Doorknob I Railings III
and a vulgar sound like "Yah"—
Better French with all its failings
than a backward-looking Я!

Christmas brought the festive
season,
brought the indigestive tum;
Christmas brought me back my
reason,
and I knew I'd had it, chum.

* * * * *

So will you have, though your
fingers
itch to turn to Lesson One.
Popov comes, but Russian lingers;
East is East; my tale is done.

Eumastes was Disqualified.

I AM an ordinary, what you might
call representative British sports-
man of the arm-chair school. I
have most of the records at my finger-
tips and I sleep with the batting-
averages under my pillow. The facts
of sport are meat and drink to me.
Facts, understand.

Now, I have been reading a lot of
stuff lately about the old Olympic
Games, a lot of fine prose stiff with
classical reference and rich metaphor.
But I am not impressed. When I read
that somebody called Isocrates won the
200 yards in 752 B.C., and that ancient
statues of him now stand in most
American museums I am still unim-
pressed. I want his time, a report on
the condition of the track and a state-
ment about the speed and direction of
the wind. I want *facts*, and none of the
pundits hands them out. All this stuff
about Herakles and his wild olives is
very interesting but it doesn't satisfy
the ordinary, what you might call
representative British sportsman.

Mind you, I do not blame the pundits.
They can't help it if—as I believe—
the original games were phoney. Yes,
phoney! The Greeks, as every school-
boy forgets, had little algebra and less
arithmetic. They had no stop-watches,
no firearms, no photo-electric whaja-
macallits. I don't think they knew
how to measure the track accurately,
to start a race fairly or to judge it
judicially. Well, not scientifically,
anyhow. All they had was geometry
and a peculiarly arty system of
measuring proportion called the Golden
Section or dynamic symmetry. As I
see it the winners of the Old Olympics

must have been extremely lucky to get
the decision . . .

"They're just lining up for the
400 yards," a commentator of the
period might have screamed, "though,
if you ask me, it looks more like
300 yards than 400. Still, the official
geometricians have been out on the
course all morning with their set-
squares and compasses, so I suppose
it's all right. They're satisfied and so
(ha-ha) are the runners. And now . . .
they're off . . . at least Chronos is . . .
and he's well away. Eumastes and
Epaminondas are just starting . . . and
the senior geometrician is well up in
front. Now Eumastes is on Chronos's
heels, standing on them . . . and
Chronos is down. It's a terrific struggle
with Eumastes, Parmenides and Melam-
pus bunched in front . . . and there
they go over the line. Difficult to say
who won, but we'll have the result
in a few days' time. The Olympic
geometricians are comparing angles
and soon they'll slip away and work
things out. Now we'll ask Tithonus

what he thought of that race. Come
in, Tithonus."

"Thank you, Chalkenteros. Well, I
thought it a jolly good race. Pretty
close too. I thought the second geo-
metrician was a bit slow to get a good
bearing, so we may have to rely on
Sychaeus's projection from the roof of
the stadium. Still, a good race . . ."

Meanwhile . . . as the comic strips
say, the greybeards are at work in their
small back room.

"Now let the line AC be continued
to cut the track at the point D. Then
with Parmenides at E draw the
tangent ED and swing EA through
Melampus to cut the finish at F . . .
By Jove, it's beginning to look as
though Eumastes gets it . . ."

"Eumastes? But you can't possi-
bly . . ."

"Agreed. I was studying Eumastes
pretty closely before the race and
his frontal bone is definitely asym-
metrical."

"And what about his tibia!"

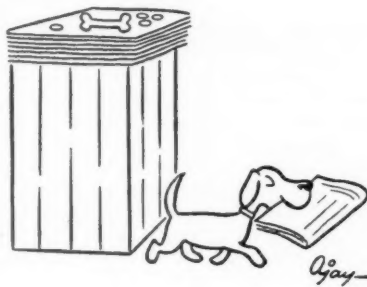
"Quite, quite. To say nothing of the
square on his hypotenuse!"

"Very well, rule him right out."

"Chronos would make a jolly good
statue in Mantinean marble, don't you
think?"

"Yes, excellent. Chronos is the
winner. Call the messengers . . ."

Do you see what I mean? Does any
doubt remain that the races went to
those with the best profiles? Do you
see why I dare to call those old-time
races phoney? And do you under-
stand now why women were never
allowed to compete in the old
Olympics? Hod.



At the Pictures

I Remember Mama—The World and His Wife—The Red Shoes

IT'S cheering to notice the technical skill, the imagination that have gone into the making of *I Remember Mama* (Director: GEORGE STEVENS); for this is the kind of simple, homely, nostalgic

confusion on the screen as the children flash upstairs, the use of sound during the long wait in the quiet corridors of the hospital, the head held for a little in the corner of the screen's frame as a glass-topped door shuts, the feeling of the San Francisco scene, the momentary use of the big close-up. I have written more about this picture than I meant to write, because I enjoyed it (in spite of what I still think are its faults of sentimentality) much more than I expected.

The film version of *State of the Union*, the play by HOWARD LINDSAY and RUSSEL CROUSE, is in this country called *The World and His Wife* (Director: FRANK CAPRA); partly, I suppose, because of some idea that a selling title needs to suggest personalities rather than abstractions and partly because over here we are believed not to know the phrase *The State of the Union* anyway. But it would have been just as well to choose a title that might be expected to come to mind when one recalled the story's theme; why one should be expected to connect

some of that familiar uplift about the future of democracy (delivered this time in the emotional manner that seems to demand the repetition between every two or three phrases of the interlocutor's Christian name). The handling of the scenes in which the politicians are shown in action is first-rate; one gets really keen pleasure from watching the way in which the fragments of action are interlaced, as well as amusement from the wisecracks that incessantly enliven the dialogue.

The appeal of *The Red Shoes* (Directors: MICHAEL POWELL and EMERIC PRESSBURGER) is mainly visual. You don't need to know anything about ballet to appreciate it, though perhaps those who do will be most impressed. The liveliness and apparent authenticity of the Covent Garden back-stage stuff, the brilliance in design of many magnificent scenes of colour both natural and artificial, and the beauty and dramatic talent of a new film personality in MOIRA SHEARER, should make *The Red Shoes* attractive enough even for anybody uninterested in dancing. The story is that one about the cold-hearted impresario (ANTON WALBROOK) who ruins other people's lives because of his passion for art.

R. M.



(*I Remember Mama*)

UNFORGETTABLE UNCLE

Uncle Chris OSCAR HOMOLKA

story that is usually allowed to make its effects with no such assistance. A succession of episodes in the life of a Norwegian family in San Francisco early in the century, it has the weaknesses of any string of incidents (the main weakness is nearly always in the linking device itself) as well as a great wealth of sentiment which occasionally becomes sentimentality; nevertheless there is a striking amount of impressively good "cinema" in it, and for this alone many a hard-headed cynic will find it enjoyable. It is also most beautifully played; the performance of IRENE DUNNE as *Mama*, a part quite unlike any I have seen her in before, is admirable to an affecting degree, and OSCAR HOMOLKA's *Uncle Chris* is splendid bravura, the happiest film part he has ever had. A special word must be given, too, to the handling of the family scenes in which several of the children appear together; they have the flavour of reality. On top of all this there is the pleasure to be got from the touches of technical brilliance: the speed suggested by the momentary

this one with the picture in which SPENCER TRACY played the part of an honest man who refused to become a stooge for the professional politicians I can't imagine. As the story develops one soon recognizes the qualities in it that attracted Mr. CAPRA: here as usual is the conflict between "the little people" and the cynical machine of power, in which the little people come out on top because of their well-known monopoly of kindness, simplicity, decency, human sympathy, honest fun and one thing and another. And certainly it is crackingly well done, always entertaining and absorbing throughout its considerable length. Here again, I found the picture enjoyable—I would willingly see it again—in spite of certain patches of sentimentality and "hokum" and



(*The World and His Wife*)

MR. GOOD-DEEDS IN A NAUGHTY WORLD

Jim Conover ADOLPHE MENJOU
Grant Matthews SPENCER TRACY
Kay Thorndyke ANGELA LANSBURY
Mary Matthews KATHARINE HEPBURN

Confidence

I HOPE you don't mind my popping in like this, old man. I just happened to be passing and I saw that the front door of your flat was open, and I remembered that you were making your important speech this evening at the Area Rally, and I thought I ought to take the opportunity of wishing you luck. If you can make a real hit it will do you a lot of good in the Party, with Lord Cottonstone and all the other big noises sitting there on the platform lapping up everything you say and wondering whether to earmark you for the Cabinet if by a miracle you get elected to Parliament.

When I saw the front door open I didn't ring the bell because I thought the porter would probably answer it and say you had given strict instructions not to be disturbed. I know myself how maddening it is to have people popping in and nattering all sorts of nonsense just as you are trying to concoct something really de-lousing to say about Aneurin Bevan. But your last three speeches have been such terrible flops that I thought a few words of cheer and comfort might be welcome.

I've listened to most of your speeches since you were adopted as a Parliamentary candidate, old man, and for a long time I've been racking my brains to lay my finger on just where you fail. It seems to me that it isn't what you say that lets you down, but the perfectly awful way you say it. One expects a lot of platitudes and padding in a political speech, but a really experienced speaker can say something perfectly puerile in a way that makes it sound quite astoundingly original and brilliant. If you could speak a bit more like Churchill and a bit less like a third-rate auctioneer trying to sell a cracked aspidistra-pot on the last day of a four-day sale I don't think it would matter that your actual stuff is so very mediocre.

Your voice I suppose you can't help, but there are just a couple of pitfalls, if you don't mind my being perfectly frank, old man, that I think you ought to try to avoid. When you are speaking quietly you don't need to adopt a dreary and inaudible monotone, and when you raise your voice for the highly-coloured passages you want at all costs to try to sound a little bit less like Donald Duck.

Then of course there is the way you walk to the front of the platform to start your speech. There is an art in this. Watch any experienced speaker

and you will see that when he is called upon by the chairman his face lights up happily and he strides boldly forward, adopts an easy and confident stance, and smiles round pleasantly before he begins, as though he were quite certain that a good time was about to be had by all. If you'll forgive my saying so, old man, you always creep to the front of the platform with a hang-dog air as though you were going into the dock to face a particularly mean and sneaking charge. If you had the bold-faced swagger of a really red-blooded criminal people would not mind so much, but you have the air of a man who has stolen toffees from children or milk from the doorstep of a blind man. Then you look round the audience in a hunted

sort of way as if you wished that both you and they were sitting quietly at home listening to the wireless.

But this is your big chance this evening, and you can rely on all your old friends being there to lead the applause when you sit down, even if you have made a complete hash of the whole thing. Well, I must pop off now, and I hope I haven't disturbed your train of thought. I only looked in because I knew that a few friendly words of cheer would help to give you confidence for your task, and confidence is clearly what you need more than anything else, because if you fail again to-day I am afraid a lot of the Committee will be inclined to start looking round for another candidate.

D. H. B.



"Oh yes, I should be miserable without my evening paper."



"Turned out that neither of us could tie a white tie properly."

Thoughts

TO-DAY I am going to write about some of the thoughts people think, and I shall start with no less topical a subject than cricket. Any densely-watched cricket-match produces, of course, innumerable thoughts packed in rows in no special order, so that on one side of a fierce, technically fortified piece of bowler-following you may get someone speculating on the human machinery behind the score-board, and on the other some worrier adding up how much bread there is at home. But the thought I want to draw my readers' attention to is the queer idea clung to by all cricket-watchers that if they could convey to the side they want to win how important it is that this side should win, then the side in question would undoubtedly see to it that it does win. There is another widespread bit of cricket thinking, the wireless public's belief that it is responsible for any cricketer who is got out immediately after it has turned on its wireless set, but this is only an offshoot from the effect watchers think they have on the highlights of the game, and has little to do with the invention of wireless. What has more to do with it is the audible silence by which, at a certain patch of the nine o'clock news, cricket fans indicate with retrospective results that the people talking to them might as well not be.

Now I come to some of my readers' thoughts about music; I mean, what they think when, again in rows, they are sitting listening to a concert and are therefore left mentally to themselves for perhaps half an hour at a time. I am not referring to what the very musical or the very unmusical think, for the very musical are thinking about the music,

and the very unmusical taking the chance of a nice quiet rest even though it is rather noisy. But in between these extremes there is a layer of humanity which, when it listens to music, branches off too soon for its conscience into a mental state which seems to have more to do with itself than with the music. However, this layer has only to note its reaction to the Unfinished Symphony—listening for the next note because it knows what it will be—to see what it could do with any music equally interwoven into life. In justice to this middle layer I must remark also on what it thinks when it hears what it believes are called concert renderings of jazz tunes—a department of music that has produced many a fine if unwritten letter to *The Times*. As for what people think about cinema organs, when they think about them in the way I mean, sociologists tell us that if those responsible for these instruments knew, they would at least no longer have the excuse of not knowing.

EGOISTS though my readers may be if they are, they must have noticed at least one indication that they are less so than they sometimes imagine; I refer to that well-known occasion—surprisingly, it happens quite often this way round—when the person they are talking to is being either interested or polite, but anyway giving them the chance to talk about themselves. The funny thing is that, although human nature can hardly be expected not to like talking about itself, at the same time it can feel quite sort of cross at having to do so—a fact with which psychologists, when they are feeling particularly buffeted by their job, can always cheer themselves up. And while I am on the subject of conversation I must mention the essential staginess of the remark thought up in the kitchen and carried into the sitting-room with the coffee; it may be nothing more momentous than the information that a potato-peeler that works makes all the difference, but the simplest sentence, when pre-arranged and without context, is to the speaker something delivered rather than spoken.

Talking of pre-arranged sentences, I imagine that many of my readers have decided that, on the whole, they would not perhaps show up very well in a brains trust, where in spite of being unarranged beforehand much of the prose spoken has an impressive tidiness. Sociologists say that there are, however, a few people modestly ready to be called on, and that their attitude has been settled by careful individual thinking. Another thing people think about the Brains Trust is that if it knows the right answer it should give it quickly before settling down to give the speakers a fair hearing. I must bring in two more of the many thought-processes produced by the wireless; the grudging awe my readers accord to the Third Programme for its unwavering attitude to occasions like New Year's Eve, and their hard-won knowledge that the overloudness of Big Ben is no clue to exactly how much too loud the news will be.

Finally, as a goodish example of a thought that everyone thinks, the musical and the unmusical, the cricket expert and non-expert alike, I must mention the reaction of the waiting customers to people buying new shoes; a whole-hearted mental agreement, as they watch the tryer-on walking up and down in the final choice, that, whether or not the shoes are what the other customers would have suggested, they do at least look splendidly new.

ANDE.

"If the Councillors of Matlock were to walk up Riber Road and look across at Masson I believe they would do all in their power to see that this barbarism is nipped in the bud."

Letter in Derbyshire paper.

Cut short, in fact.

Punch's Pocket Book

HERE and there, in the recesses of an old bureau or buried in some far corner of a second-hand bookshop, one may find a forgotten copy of "Mr. Punch's Pocket Book." My own rather dilapidated edition, dating back a hundred years, begins with sixty-two pages of general information followed by a diary, and the humour comes at the end. It was given to me some years ago by an elderly landlady as a reward for my appreciation of her poems. It contains so much in a small space that it must have been a useful book of reference in its day, but now, although it is of no practical value whatever, it has become a hundred years more interesting.

Good Queen Adelaide and the Duchess of Kent were still alive. Lord John Russell was Prime Minister and Palmerston Foreign Secretary. The rest of the Cabinet are mere ghosts, except Macaulay, the Paymaster-General, who seems to the modern reader to have got into the wrong section. Among the small fry are some pleasant names; one would like to know more of Alegro Greville and Corry Connellan, Private Secretaries, and J. Oldrini, Receiver of Fees to the House of Peers. The Upper House was smaller, of course, but not in proportion to the smaller population. It numbered four hundred and forty-six members, including, oddly enough, one hundred and thirteen earls, but only twenty-one viscounts. The viscounts have certainly spurred ahead since, though they still have not caught up. It is interesting to see in the House of Commons list the double returns: it was still possible to stand for two places at once. The staff of the Commons has a pleasing flavour of nepotism: Chief Clerk, J. H. Ley; Clerk Assistant, W. Ley. Second Clerk Assistant, H. Ley. Assistant, G. Ley. Assistant Clerk of the Journals, W. Ley. The Clerks of the Ingrossments were Gunnell, Gunnell and Ginger. It is possible in reading the lists of Ministries and Government Departments to imagine that a hundred years ago things were really much the same; but reading the names of British Ambassadors to The Hanseatic Towns, New Granada, Rio de la Plata, Tuscany and the Sicilies restores that sense of the remoteness of the past which so easily gets blurred.

There were eighteen theatres in London and eighty-one separate banks. Army agents are separately listed, including one for the Deccan Prize-money. At intervals the Pocket Book included some very miscellaneous and rather disapproving information about France, including the facts that there were forty-six Government pawnbrokers in the country, and that the 75,000 English residents spent between them nearly five million sterling a year. In those days *Punch* was, if not overtly Republican, at least critical of the monarchy. The headpiece of the Pocket Book is an agreeable but rather cruel caricature of the Royal Family, the Prince of Wales wearing a glengarry from which sprout three enormous feathers. One item is headed "Royal Cheer" and gives the expenditure of the Lord Steward of the Household for one year. Butcher's meat came to £9,472, vegetables to only £487: it was the pre-vitamin age. Lamps accounted for £4,166; china, glass, etc., for £1,328. Expenditure on drink was heavy—wine £4,850, liqueurs, etc., £1,843, ale and beer £2,811.

The lawyers had a long vacation that lasted from June 12th to November 2nd. The usual hours of public offices were 10 to 4, including the Admiralty Civil Department, though the Admiralty Naval Department proudly opened from 10 to 5. Apothecaries' Hall was open from 9 to 8. I do not know whether this was to provide urgent medicines or to qualify without delay those who wished to do so. The Accountant General closed for two hours in the middle of the day, and the hours of the Colonial Office are

ambiguously given as "uncertain." A curious light is thrown on the structure of society by the lists of witnesses' fees. In the superior courts surgeons, surveyors and attorneys got two guineas a day, merchants one guinea, tradesmen 15s. and journeymen mechanics 7s. In the County Court there was a different classification: gentlemen, merchants, bankers and professional men 7s. 6d.; tradesmen, auctioneers, accountants, clerks and yeomen 5s.; journeymen, labourers and the like 2s. (By the way, what has happened to merchants? They just seem to have faded out, like governesses and piemen.)

There were ten dispatches of mail a day from one part of the metropolis to another; delivery took about an hour and a half, but, on the other hand, it had only just become possible to post parcels of over 1 lb. The Post Office had to pay nearly £23,000 a year in tolls. Letters addressed to bankrupts were delivered by the Post Office authorities to the assignees for a period of three months after the issue of the Fiat. This must have been more fun for the assignees than for the bankrupt or his beloved.

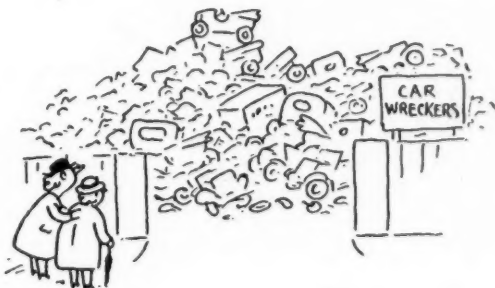
The literary section, a feature in which the Pocket Book seems to me a great improvement on *Whitaker* or the *Statesman's Yearbook*, is concerned predominantly with debt; landladies and matrimony provide a good deal of material, but debt easily leads the field. Pecuniary difficulties seem to have been the unfailing stand-by of the humorist of 1848. Even articles which go on to something quite different begin with references to escaping from creditors or backing bills. Whether the modern *Punch* writer is more honest, more affluent or just more reticent I don't know. On the whole the verse wears better than the prose and the satire better than the mere waggishness. One marked difference from the modern prose article is in the lack of compression: there are more words to the square joke, and many a harassed wit of to-day must envy the golden age when having used a single idea for an article you then proceeded to use it again for the next.

THERE was a young fellow called Horace
Whose head was exceedingly porous.

When they said "It won't rhyme!"

I replied "Give me time

To explain. I happen to be a poet with a keen sense of Britain's need for dollars, and this limerick is intended for export to the U.S.A. where it may conceivably earn one for us."



"Ob, my dear, what a dreadful accident!"



"... absolutely NO visitors about this season."

Hayfield

THE oil-filed teeth
chatter
with a criss-cross,
corncrake
cannibal clatter.

It was Spring
and you could cover
five daisies with your shoe:
O wonderful! you said—
and a thousand miracles happened,
and each enchanted you:
the morning skies were grey,
the evenings red.

There came cowslips,
and buttercups,
bee-orchis,
milkmaids,
clover:
and the grass grew.

The grass, and the hundred different kinds of grass,
grew taller in sun and rain

a millionfold;
flowered, and seeded,
lived in air and light,
drank dew,
and gripped the earth with roots untold. . . .

The myriad insects that make the grass their home
spelled out their alphabets
of droning words:
the froghoppers spanned
their domes of Xanadu-glass,
alarms of fire disturbed the ladybirds.

The wind made love to the grass,
which laughed in the sun:
the butterflies played their masques
at midsummer;
the crickets beat for it their thousand
drums;
hares brushed the thick dew
with their thicker fur:

and now the pageant's done,
the reaper comes.

R. C. S.



MARATHON

MONDAY, July 26th.—

With the sun shining so intensely that even a Test Match with the Australians, in Leeds, was able to go on uninterrupted, the House of Commons, sartorially-speaking, fairly let itself go.

Waistcoats disappeared as if by magic. Light jackets appeared as miraculously—and high spirits with them. Quite the most magnificent figure in the entire House was Mr. VAL MCENTEE, Chairman of the Kitchen Committee (known to the irreverent as "Minister of the Interior"), who wore light khaki silk, with a red tie. The popular "Mac" has something of the appearance of the immortal Colonel Blimp (but none of his Blimpish characteristics), and the ensemble (as the fashion-writers say) was extremely effective.

Members had not at that time seen Mr. MCENTEE's chief executive, Major S. E. SIDWELL, General Manager of the Catering Department, whose coat was of cream silk, giving him that calm and cool appearance always associated with Parliament's kitchen arrangements. And, by a coincidence, Mr. MCENTEE had to answer one of the rare questions directed to him in his official capacity.

It was about "blanquette of beaver" which had figured on the menu in the dining-rooms. Mr. SKEFFINGTON LODGE, whose interest in animals (both zoological and gastronomic) has been noted before, wanted some more details. For instance, country of origin. Mr. MCENTEE replied that the "beaver" used in the dish was beaver, and that it came from Norway.

Mr. SKEFFINGTON LODGE exclaimed (with an air of astonishment) that he had been told something he did not know, and asked that biographical details be attached to all dishes in future.

The Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, with a keen eye on custom, replied enthusiastically that blanquette of beaver was excellent fare and that the Committee had "tried it on the Chairman."

With admirable self-restraint nobody mentioned "vermin"—just then—but Mr. SKEFFINGTON LODGE had another query, this time about cormorants. Remembering the strange bodies that have appeared from time to time in the dining-rooms, Members leaped up with anxious requests for assurance that cormorant (with or without a menu-French title) would not figure in future meals.

Mr. MCENTEE, though inclined to be non-committal, eventually gave the desired assurance.

Impressions of Parliament

Monday, July 26th.—House of Commons: Menu is Scrutinized.

Tuesday, July 27th.—House of Commons: Farewell to Sir Gilbert Campion.

Then Mr. TOM WILLIAMS, the Minister of Agriculture, was asked a direct question about "vermin." Air Commodore HARVEY wanted to know how many people were employed in England and Wales in destroying vermin. The Minister, in answer, carefully avoided the word, and referred to "rats and mice"—thereby reducing the chance of smart rejoinders from the Opposition on the now rather tiresome and over-worked subject of "Tory vermin."

Just because it was that sort of afternoon, Mr. KEELING asked why the Ministry of Works was straightening the sword of King Richard Cœur de Lion. To the knowing, this clearly



Impressions of Parliamentarians

54. Mr. McEntee (Walthamstow, West)
Chairman of the Kitchen Committee

referred to the statue outside the Houses of Parliament, but some visitors from overseas who sat in the galleries were puzzled by this apparent piece of *lèse-majesté*.

Mr. KEY, the Minister, replied that the sword seemed in danger of breaking, and Mr. KEELING (a notable amateur guide to the Palace of Westminster) hastened to remind him that the sword was honourably bent (by a piece of German bomb) during the Battle of Britain, and suggested that it should be allowed to remain bent, as a symbol of the fact that Britain, though battered and bent, was never broken.

Such poetry did not appeal to the down-to-earth Minister, and he replied (more or less) that he preferred an

unbent sword, even if it did seem less symbolical.

The business of the day was a highly-uninteresting discussion on the Bill to nationalize the gas industry.

Their Lordships are much wiser in these matters. They had a day off.

TUESDAY, July 27th.—For forty-two years the House of Commons has known Sir GILBERT CAMPION as a member of its own "Silent Service," the Clerks. For the past eleven years Sir GILBERT has been Clerk of the House, helping and counselling all from Mr. Speaker downwards, expert authority in all matters of procedure, friend and guide to all.

Members learned with regret that the time has come for his well-earned retirement, and that, as soon as Parliament rises, he and Lady Campion are off on a tour of the Parliaments of the Dominions—the precise form of busman's holiday those who know Sir GILBERT would have expected him to take.

The news that Sir GILBERT's place at the head of the Table will no longer be occupied by him was softened by the accompanying news that the new occupant would be popular Mr. "ERIC" METCALFE, hitherto Clerk-Assistant. Mr. METCALFE is to be succeeded by Mr. EDWARD FELLOWES, Second Clerk Assistant and famed as the Commander of Parliament's very own Home Guard during the most difficult times of the war.

For Members, journalists, officials and staff it was "Farewell and Hail!" The Table, like the House itself, goes on for ever, for the new Second Clerk Assistant is to be Mr. GORDON, already a familiar younger figure behind the scenes.

The subject of debate was the delightfully cool one of water-supply. Members sat sweltering on the benches while this tempting topic was discussed at length. Then the majority of them strolled out to watch the Thames, which was (truth to tell) more interesting and infinitely cooler.

At the end of the week both Houses are to adjourn for the summer recess—the international situation (as Ministers put it) permitting.

o o

"One of the most important of roads in the whole of the South Western Districts is being allowed to go to wrack and ruin because of a surprising lack of apathy on the part of the Divisional Council. . . ."

S. African paper.

Would you believe it?



"Hear all that noise? The skunk's just won the sweepstake on the day's run."

Le Cinq, Impair

THE grandmother clock in M. Tarragon's kitchen had already chimed two, disapprovingly. With characteristic embellishments the old man was embarking on his military service in the nineties when a shrill scream above us broke the stillness of the night. I jumped to my feet, and M. Tarragon rose more slowly. I noticed that as he did so he glanced irritably at the calendar.

"Intolerably early!" he muttered to himself.

"Someone is being murdered up there!" I cried, taking an interlocking grip on a heavy copper stewpan.

"Do not alarm yourself, *mon ami*," he replied calmly.

"It came from this end of the house."

"It came from Number Five," he growled, shambling up the stairs. "It always does. Do not let your glass be empty while I am away."

He appeared so much in command of the situation that I sat down again, and in a few minutes he was back, mopping his brow.

"The afflictions of an *hôte* are very curious," he observed. "You would think that lap-dogs, and dipsomaniacs, and *pensionnaires* with ingenious derangements of the gastric tracts would be enough, without—"

"Who screamed up there?" I asked sharply, for my nerves were still a little on edge.

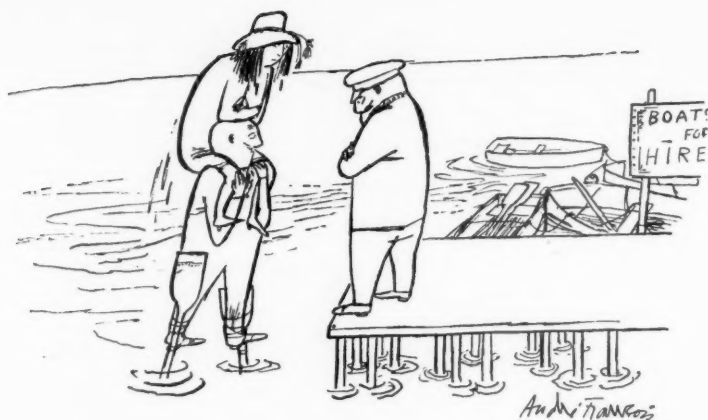
"The American lady who paints our beautiful Norman horses with three green legs, standing on their heads. She is already planning to read a paper on the whole incident to a circle of equally inquisitive ladies in Minnesota. I was able to assure her it is never his habit to return the same night, but she appeared disappointed."

"Whose habit?"

"I must remember to tell her in the morning about the night during the occupation when General Stumpfadler, a pig of indescribable proportions, who swilled my '28 Lafite with his breakfast, put five bullets right through him into his own hat. Not that the ladies of Minnesota will believe a word of it."

"Five bullets through whom, for goodness' sake?" I begged, desperately.

"Why, through Gaspard. Although you have slept in Number Five I do not think you and he have met." M. Tarragon eased the cork gently out of the bottle. "When I bought this hotel there was no reference to him in the deeds, and the agent omitted to inform me I had acquired one of the most reliable phantoms in all France. At first, it goes without saying, I laughed when clients came to complain of the old waiter leaning over the end of the bed cupping his hand behind his ear as if to murmur 'Couldn't quite get what you said, sir.' But soon I was obliged to make inquiries. I went through the village records with the clerk at the *mairie*, and at last I came on it. In September 1864 an Austrian count stopped at the hotel on his way to stay with some great family in the west. He went to bed early, having drunk a great deal of brandy, in Number Five, which has always been our best room. Later in the evening he rang, no doubt



for more brandy, and the waiter who answered his summons was one Gaspard Roger, a native of Pontaudemer and rather deaf. Presumably on being asked to repeat his order a little louder—one can only piece together the two sets of facts as best one can—the count flung an empty decanter full in the man's face and killed him outright. The affair was hushed up for diplomatic reasons, but not unnaturally it still appears to rankle with poor Gaspard."

"Have you ever seen him?"
"Never. By nature I am somewhat too sceptical, they say, to make a good receiving-set. But Hortense, who comes from Finistère, where they can see ghosts in a fried egg, has met him frequently. She reports his demeanour to be most distinguished."

"This is fantastic," I protested. "You ought to have a pair of crossed spooks in the Guide Michelin. Surely it's all rather awkward?"

"He rarely shows up before the end of the summer, which is why I was put out to-night. After the beginning of September I choose the occupants of Number Five with the closest care."

"Men of courage and fortitude, like me?"

"Men whose minds are well-harnessed to the earth, and known to be formidable sleepers."

"I thank you."

"Any adverse effect he may have on business is compensated by the fact that Number Five is let solidly throughout the autumn to sportsmen from the psychical societies, who arrive with cars crammed with strange engines for recording his wave-length and taking his temperature."

A creak on the stairs made my heart pound. But it was only Miss Schultz, wearing a red turban and a plastic macintosh.

"Pardon me, Monsieur Tarragon," she said, "but I want to get stuck into

this while it's hot. Can you give me anything on this guy before he was croaked?"

M. Tarragon looked innocently thoughtful for a moment.

"He had hammer-toes, M'amselle, and his wife beat him. That is unfortunately all the significant data we have been able to discover."

"Thanks a lot."

"What I would not give to be a little bird on the wall in Minnesota!" he added, when she was safely back in Number Five.

ERIC.

The Shocking Affair at Dillwater

MR. BUNNING and I had not, at the time of his exposure, come to know each other well; even the spurious jollity with which Mr. A. Putty, Prop., strove to force the guests at "Goonside" into each other's pockets irrespective of accent, age or temperament, left our reserve virtually intact. But he had been placed at the next (separate) table to mine, and towards the end of the first week we had begun to exchange morning greetings and bottles of ketchup; by the beginning of the second we were within an ace of speaking between meals.

If I had been asked for my impressions of Bunning I could only have said that he seemed a subdued, scholarly old man who was always ready to eat. The air at Dillwater Bay tends to encourage promptness at the table, and I myself was almost invariably the second guest in the dining-room, arriving some minutes before the cheap, ignoble gong was beaten by Bert the porter, a man whose lowly origins were thinly disguised by a tight white

jacket and loose grey flannels, and who sought the ear of Mr. Putty, when occasion demanded, with the standard gambit, "Ere a mo', Guv."

The first guest was almost invariably Bunning. I say almost, in both cases, because on one morning, and one only, I was actually first; and Bunning came in at a rapid shuffle, an inch of pyjama cord peeping over the top of his trousers. On the other days I always found him stooping over one of the laid tables, never his own, in an attitude of peering absorption, but at the squeak of the swing-door he would at once return to his place and make a great show of consulting a small black pocket-book, sometimes jotting down a note.

It was on the Tuesday of the second week that the whole affair came out. Bunning was pottering about as usual when I entered the room, and my first hint that something was wrong was a scuffling and whispering behind the screened passage to the kitchens. I think one of the waitresses said, "Leave the pore old chap be," to which the voice of Mr. Putty, scraped of its public butteriness, replied, "You get on with the toast. I'll pore old chap 'im." And the nose of Mr. Putty, sharp with menace, appeared round the screen.

Bunning, in his own chair now and consulting his pocket-book short-sightedly, gave a nervous, up-fluttering look when he found the proprietor at his elbow. "Oh, good morning," he said. For answer Mr. Putty folded himself suddenly forward from the hips in a stiff bow and struck Bunning lightly above the heart. The blow produced a small, dull ringing noise, and he cried exultantly, "Ah!"

"Here," I said, rising. "Look here." I am a peaceable man, but guests have to stand together at such times.

But Bunning seemed to have no spirit in him. He allowed his white-plumed head to droop for a moment, and then muttered, "Oh, well. All right, then." From his inside breast pocket he slowly extracted a green-bordered saucer, chipped and veined with age. Mr. Putty snatched it roughly.

"Now then," he said, with a snarl—"I don't want the police, nor nothing of that nature; but per'aps you'd oblige by stepping up to your room and unlocking your bag, and then you can kindly take the first train off out of it."

By this time I was studying my table-cloth closely, wishing myself elsewhere, and did not at first realize that the speaker's next words were addressed to me. "... witness ... corroboratin' evidence ..." came to me dimly.

"I beg your pardon?" I said, avoiding Bunning's eye without difficulty.

"Since you've seen so much, old man," said the proprietor. He was inviting me to join him in escorting the criminal.

It happened that there was something I wanted from my own room, adjoining Bunning's, otherwise I should probably have declined. As it was the three of us went on our disagreeable mission together, just as the main body of breakfasters began to surge in from sunning themselves on the front steps.

Apart from a slight grunt as he stooped to unlock his inexpensive suitcase, Bunning said nothing. Mr. Putty fell eagerly on his knees and began to rummage. One after the other he laid on the faded carpet two knives and a fish-fork (all with loose handles), a napkin in holes, a tarnished cruet-frame with tortured legs, three cracked plates, a bent teaspoon, two badly chipped cups, a greenish mustard-spoon, and a small bean-shaped vegetable-dish with a full inch missing from one end. He sat back on his heels and glinted up at me triumphantly.

"You're a witness, old man, eh? In case of unpleasantness, like?" He glanced at the silent Bunning, now gazing out of the window in a vain attempt to get a last look at the sea. (One had to lean out.)

I nodded.

"Sorry to 'ave involved you," said Mr. Putty, as he deftly bundled the loot into one of Bunning's pillow-slips. And to Bunning: "There's a train at nine-one. I'll have your account made up."

At the door he paused, frowning. "There was a pink saucer," he rasped. But as the old man only sat down suddenly on a basket-seated chair and gave a short, bitter laugh, he nodded to me and went out, slamming the door. A trickle of plaster rustled down somewhere behind the wallpaper.

Bunning took out his little black book, looked at me and away again. He sighed.

"I was particular only to take articles unfitted for functional employment," he said. "I *did* see the pink saucer, though not recently. But as it was neither chipped nor cracked I felt I could hardly..." He trailed off, and sighed again as he ran a finger down the pencilled page. "I fear I lack the ruthlessness of the true connoisseur, but the collection was beginning to take valuable shape: both the knives were 'Standard Hotel, Dublin.'" He fluttered me an embarrassed glance. "I thought one might do for a—swap... The napkin, 'S.S. Queen of the Isles'—a very rare piece; the cruet-frame, 'The Queen and Keys, Cheltenham'; one of the plates, 'Jack's Snacks, Worksop'; another, 'Miss Waterton's Tea Lounge'; another..."

I felt a stab of compassion as I watched that bent grey head. I crept quietly out and into the room next door. When I got back he was ending the catalogue on an almost jubilant note, momentarily forgetting, no doubt, that the scribbled record was all that remained to him. "... the mustard-spoon, 'New South Wales Government

Tourist Bureau'; and the fish-fork, 'Royal Hibernian Hotel.'"

He sagged in his chair.

"It was a pity," I murmured from the door, "about the pink saucer."

"If I'd had *that*"—he spoke half to himself—"I think I could have borne the rest."

But it was only when he rose a few seconds later to take his dressing-gown from the back of the door that he saw what I was holding in my fingers. He went quite pale.

"You?"

I nodded, and drew him gently towards me. Together, reverently, aloud, we read the pink saucer's inscription.

"Stockton and Darlington Railway, 1826..."

Then on 'an impulse I pressed it into his tremulous hand and slipped out before he could thank me. After all, I was the younger man. I could start my own collection next year.

J. B. B.

Austerity

"Britain's biggest fashion parade opens in London to-day. It will be dull at first."

B.B.C. news summary.

"Wanted small white aprons, hangmen's life stories, or prisoners."

Advt. in "Leicester Mercury."

Somebody filling the gaps in a collection?



At the Play

King John (OPEN AIR)—*Too True to be Good* (ARTS)

IF I were given the task of bear-leading any one of Shakespeare's characters on a tour of modern England it would be the *Bastard*, I think, whom I should choose. Such a fellow would provide fine company in any century. You could take him where you pleased, to club or pub, knowing that he would have the oldest member chuckling and the parlour on a roar. You could take him home, sure that his wit and gallantry would win every heart. You could even take him, with modest confidence, to Lord's. A man of broad understanding and a comprehensive sense of irony that would bridge time and put the little triumphs of a mechanical age in their true perspective. I can think of nothing better than a week's walking-tour with the *Bastard*.

He has been very well represented at the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park, by Mr. JOSEPH O'CONOR, whose valiant address and quick, audacious humour fitted him roundly. "Mad world!" cried the *Bastard*, and the latest headlines from Berlin testified to his judgment; and as the last line of the play rang out defiantly through a stormy evening in Mr. O'CONOR's rousing tones no one doubted where he would have stood in the matter of the air-lift.

King John needs a big stage for its fevered comings and goings on both sides of the Channel, and Mr. ROBERT ATKINS was able to put his lengthy sword to excellent use. He has shown us he can do almost anything with bushes, but since the citizens of Angiers could hardly have cocked their snook at kings from the top of a flowering shrub, suitable battlements were provided for them; while on the opposite corner further defences were reared from which the infant *Arthur* could conveniently meet his untimely fate. An air of majesty was lent to the proceedings by three heraldic leo-dachshunds, volant on a banner. Up to a point Mr. DAVID READ played *John* effectively. He looked the picture of a king, in a scarlet robe lined with yellow and a spread of jewels that made one blink, and he moved royally; but although he has a good voice I thought the way he spoke was too monotonously mannered.

Hubert (Mr. DENIS MCCARTHY), *Philip of France* (Mr. ERNEST BALE), the *Dauphin* (Mr. JONATHAN MEDDINGS, particularly well spoken) and the *Cardinal* (Mr. CLEMENT HAMELIN) were all impressive, and so was Mr. TRISTAN RAWSON's *Salisbury*, a part calling for extreme tact if weight is to be given to a man who at one moment is talking scornfully about not lining the *King's* "thin bestained cloak with our pure

over half a century. It suffers more than does its preface, though the insistence of the latter on the purity of the Soviet system might require some slight modification, and its glowing reference to the efficiency of Mussolini makes curious reading to-day. But whether you agree with G. B. S. or not about the crushing boredom of having money and about the iniquities of capitalism, the preface makes its points with his old cunning, whereas the play is a meeting of a peripatetic debating society in which a lot of temporary members, drawn together with no particular dramatic cogency, loose off at the general hopelessness of the 1920's. Some of these orators contribute entertaining speeches, but there seems little reason why they should not go on for ever, as indeed a few of them show signs of doing. Mr. SHAW is telling us here what produced the Bright Young People, a job which Mr. EVELYN WAUGH in his early work did more wittily, leaving out the halitosis jests and the puns about sergeants in a mess in which Mr. SHAW amazingly indulges.

Mr. ESMÉ PERCY's production at the Arts is lively, with a welcome emphasis on clear speaking. As the disillusioned young airman tasting the Dead Sea fruit of wealth Mr. MARIUS GORING acts the fool charmingly, Miss LUCIE MANNHEIM gets good fun out of the chambermaid turned bogus countess, and, Miss JOYCE HERON being unfortunately ill the night we went, Miss JOY HODGKINSON stepped into the breach at short notice and managed bravely. The most dramatic character in the play is the sketching *Colonel*, and both he and the Bible-thumping *Sergeant* are in good hands, those of Mr. CHARLES LLOYD PACK and Mr. MICHAEL BRENNAN. ERIC.

"Small Cottage for Strong Needlewoman one gent."

"Wanted" Advt. in "Birmingham Mail."

Solution next week.



[*Too True to be Good*]

LOOKING UP TO FATHER.

<i>The Elder</i>	MR. WILFRID WALTER
<i>The Burglar</i>	MR. MARIUS GORING
<i>The Patient</i>	MISS JOY HODGKINSON

honours," and the next, having been tipped off by the dying *Melun* that the *Dauphin* is about to rat on him, declaring brightly his intention to "calmly run on in obedience, even to our ocean, to our great King John." The widowed lament of *Constance* was powerfully keened by Miss PHYLLIS BARKER. A little more spirit might perhaps have been shown by the two lads, *Henry* and *Arthur*.

This was a pleasant production, happily staged. On a fine evening—and at the moment of writing it is almost too fine—there are few more pleasant places than the Open Air Theatre, with a nice bit of Shakespeare going on.

Rates Complaint

To the Chairman of the Rates Department, Chesterlee Corporation.

DEAR SIR,—I see from your "Final Demand" that because I don't pay my rates on the dot you want to cause trouble. I am enclosing the money but I should just like to say how little we get for it. I suppose you wouldn't expect to see me at the Town Hall waving a summons just because the dustman didn't call, but that is what often happens. I have known him rattle the gate and not wait for anybody to unbolt it; once he just looked at my side-entrance and decided I was not there when actually I was decorating in the bedroom.

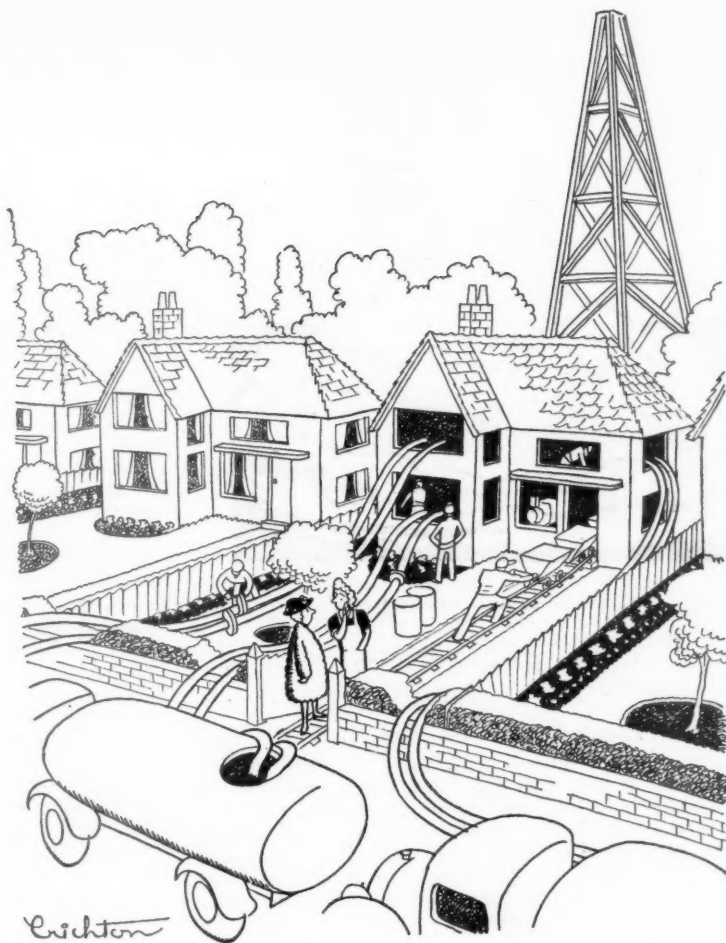
Then again there are the street lights, or there ought to be. Just because the nights were drawn out a little, by what authority did your man no longer turn up? I expect if I deducted the fourteen 2·06d. which it says go for street lamps you would take a dim view of it. And when the lights in this road are on, they are about 40 candle-power all covered up by trees which you haven't had cut. Where does the money go to? You can't spend much on sweeping the roads, though I could sweep them better at half the cost on account of better supervision. Sandwiches and smoking are the trouble, as every resident knows.

In warm weather the Sanitary People could do a lot more with some of the drains. I expect they take their money every week, smells or no smells, but one day you can look forward to the extra expense of a nasty epidemic, and have nobody to blame except yourself. Certainly don't blame the rate-payers who pay through the nose for something better.

The schools are all right for those who need them, apart from being on holiday on the slightest pretext, but we never get a policeman down this road. I should think you could pay a hundred policemen out of what you would save in crime at the Town Hall.

You must see the remarks every week in the local *Independent*, but honestly with one foot up and one foot down when you cross the main roads you might be in Darkest Africa, where they don't pay rates. If you can't get things done because of the Austerity Crisis, then put the rates down. It is unjust to go on badgering honest citizens who have all they can do to keep their heads above water without paying rates which go straight down the drain.

Yours faithfully,
S. SUMPWORTHY.



"And now sometimes I almost wish we HADN'T struck oil."

The Sikh with the Sky-Blue Puggree

ON Saturday night I met a Sikh
With a sky-blue puggree wound in a peak;
He was tall and tawny, the colour of teak,
And his eyes were the hue of a blackbird's beak.
I said to him, Sir, do you breathe and speak,
Or are you the ghost of an ancient Greek?
And are there others of your physique,
Or are you exclusively unique,
A kind of Phoenix, a natural freak,
Like the Mumbling Mouse of Mozambique,
Or the cuneiform cat with the crimson streak,
Or the piebald stag or the skewbald peke?
Pray pardon, I said, extremely meek,
It is wisdom and knowledge alone I seek.
But swollen with anger and pride and pique
He hooted and snorted and said, What cheek!
And boarded a bus for Barking Creek.
Perhaps I shall meet him again next week.



"Yours in haste to catch the tide."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

French Poetry—the New Look

FRENCH poets who go about in packs—the *café-less* Englishman is less gregarious—get called symbolists or surrealists or dadaists, even by people who do not know that *dada* means a hobby-horse and was a word picked out of the dictionary at random by the Rumanian poet Tzara. The principal aim of French poets from *Apollinaire* to *Aragon* (METHUEN, 7/6) bears a strong likeness to the fat boy's approach to Mrs. Wardle. French flesh began to creep with Lautréamont when "new shudders (*frissons*) ran through the intellectual atmosphere"; and Aragon's songs, like the echo that jars the glasses on the table, "are meant to '*frissonner les insensibles*.'" These vibrations and the violence, rational or irrational, that causes them, are what chiefly distinguish the thirty poets translated by Mr. W. J. STRACHAN; and for that reason the original poems might well have accompanied the renderings. English, apart from that of Poe and Beddoes, has seldom taken the *frisson* seriously. But Mr. STRACHAN's versions give an impressive idea of the impact of a formidable body of verse, much of it produced in circumstances that make for personal and artistic integrity. From its urgency, gusto, love of verbal and dialectical buffoonery, and want of consideration for the public, one suspects the forgotten champion in its pedigree to have been Browning.

H. P. E.

A Woman Surgeon

Petticoat Surgeon (PETER DAVIES, 12/6) is more like a torrent of talk, taken down by a cool strong-nerved stenographer, than an autobiography composed pen in hand. Doctor BERTHA VAN HOOSSEN, a well-known American surgeon, was born in 1863. Her early years were passed on a Michigan farm, and being country-bred, she tells us, she relishes what she calls "homespun vernacularism," and has indeed written her memoirs with an absence of squeamishness that may at times give pause even to the modern reader. There is not much about the facts of life which an intelligent child of twelve, if in need of additional

information, could not piece together from this record of a career which brought its immensely energetic, enterprising and on the whole very likeable chronicler into close contact with all the problems of medicine and surgery, from obstetrics to insanity. Dr. VAN HOOSSEN has been a general practitioner as well as a brilliant surgical specialist, and gives a specimen day in a woman doctor's life, from an emergency delivery of a premature baby and an operation on a ruptured appendix to a vigil, lasting till daybreak, by the crib of a baby with pneumonia. She has travelled as tirelessly as she has worked, all over Europe and as far as China and Japan during the earthquake of 1923. The world, she believes, is getting better, and if the boys in her youth had been like the boys to-day, she would, she told some of her old men friends, have "set up a male harem." H. K.

Chinese Kit-Cats

Although we seem to be reverting to the notion that men are more important than movements, it is hard to imagine any valid impression of England being given by a series of short biographies starting, say, with Boadicea and ending up with Sir Stafford Cripps. Yet this is the method used for covering four thousand years of Chinese history by Mr. BERNARD MARTIN. He drives off with the possibly mythical Emperor Yao and holes out with Chiang Kai-shek, filling in the interval with mystics, philosophers, travellers, storytellers, poets, pirates and more emperors and empresses. There are, oddly enough, no craftsmen. Not a single painter or potter. Perhaps the even tenor of their ways has never been chronicled. The sketches, full as they are of interesting sidelights on periods and people, are hardly designed to bring out the unifying elements in both. Their deliberate simplification—the book, one gathers, is intended for popular and even youthful consumption—tends to short-circuit debatable questions such as the culpability of "the Old Buddha" in the long series of peculiarly apposite deaths that marked her rise to, and retention of; power. The sixteen illustrations to *The Strain of Harmony* (HEINEMANN, 10/6) are happily chosen, their most interesting plate featuring the down-and-out poet Tu Fu who figures so dejectedly in the text.

H. P. E.

An Eastern Tour

Go East, Old Man (LATIMER HOUSE, 9/6), is the record of a journey over much of Africa and Asia which Mr. VERNON BARTLETT undertook with his wife in 1947. An M.P., a broadcaster, a lecturer to the Forces, a journalist, Mr. BARTLETT finally gave way while reporting the Four Powers Conference in Paris in 1946. After a very trying time, which reached its climax when he arrived in Capetown, Mr. BARTLETT recovered sufficiently to note down the observations and reflections contained in this informative, if rather jaded, book. There comes a time when even the most ardent of special correspondents wearies a little of mankind, falters as he summarizes the complexities of this or that situation, and no longer kindles as he indicates the Way Out. In South Africa Mr. BARTLETT was struck by the intricacy of the problem presented by the natives, who are being educated to appreciate the advantages of an equal status with white men, and are at the same time treated as essentially and incurably inferior. In Ceylon he suffered in a rickshaw, feeling the humiliation of the man who drew it. In Malaya he decided that the Colonial Office had managed matters there very badly of late. In Hongkong it saddened him that the Westernized Chinese were enjoying themselves in Western fashion instead of going inland to civilize their fellow-countrymen. In Japan he failed to

stem the flow of General MacArthur's conversation, and felt doubtful about the General's belief that the whole country would be Christian in ten years. H. K.

Pattern for Prose

It would be difficult to define in anything either less ethereal or less precise than an essay after his own manner just what are Mr. G. M. YOUNG's didactic objectives in his collected studies—*To-day And Yesterday* (HART-DAVIS, 8/6). He seems to be travelling, to use his own charming phrase, "at just the proper distance between the earth and the clouds" where the actual fashioning of a sentence is as full of truth and meaning as its visible pronouncement, and where a gentle optimism about the future moving out from the blue haze of the horizon ahead is as natural as a pleasant sorrowing for the fragrance of the world that has dropped beyond the violet rim behind. Whether he is establishing the four categories of social duties in the modern state, finding a political background to the *Aeneid*, selecting the greatest of typical Victorians—choosing, after inevitable dallying with John Ruskin, to name sturdy Walter Bagehot—or mixing Shakespeare in the crowd of students of the Elizabethan Middle Temple, he is always suggestive, scholarly, lucent, exact, intangible. His range is as wide as from Homer to Tennyson, from Burke to Gladstone, yet though his chapters are to be read and treasured, to be taken up again for delighted scrutiny as one may regard a piece of intricate ivory lace, it is doubtful, even though the book be closed with a feeling that the writer has been holding a lantern in some curious cloistered places, whether one will remember much except his charm. C. C. P.

In Pursuit of a Dragon

Amateurs of the literary abattoir wishing for a change of scene from the stately home with its well-groomed corpse will find *Death Takes Small Bites* (GOLLANCZ, 8/6) refreshingly different. Mr. GEORGE H. JOHNSTON has used his experience as a correspondent in the Pacific for a story of Chinese adventure which starts on the Burma Road in peace-time and leads us guessing through the swift turns of a mystery perfectly oriental in its sinister complication. American boy meets American girl on the first page, and both survive to hold hands on the last, but miraculously. Get on the wrong side of a secret society in those parts, and consider your private life gone. Try to run to earth the fiend who has stabbed a beautiful redhead in an inn, and it seems your path will cross those of a lot of dark gentlemen with inscrutable smiles, who all look the same. You may even be obliged to communicate through a curtain with a master-fiend named Heavenly Horse. Mr. JOHNSTON's picture of China is unflattering, because nearly all his Chinese have to be crooks; but at any rate it is vivid. He writes well, and his dialogue is taut, and amusing without being top-heavy with pert backchat. Thrills aside, and there are plenty, the boy-meets-girl element is dealt with in a pleasantly sub-acid manner and with more originality than is the usual cardboard romance of crime fiction; and it is a nice change from the latter's scintillating supermen to follow a shell-shocked hero, brave—but only with the utmost reluctance. E. O. D. K.

Bedside Manner

An ardent gardener, returning to a scene of war-time devastation by an undomesticated tenant, was comforted by an old Kew expert who held a watching brief for the little estate. "She never put a trowel in it, Madam," he explained, implying that it was just as well she didn't. "But your soil is still there." Unpruned cordons had

become standards, strong perennials had stifled weak ones; but the task of reclamation was not the formidable operation described in Mr. STANLEY B. WHITEHEAD's *Reclaiming Your Garden* (FABER, 18/-). Apart from a good chapter on compost—which, fortunately, is becoming *de rigueur*, the most profitable pages for the ordinary gardener deal with hedging and pruning. Hedges, being as a rule humus-makers, have a way of maintaining their own health. The profusion and vigour of hedgerow flowers is proverbial. So they can afford to dispense with D.D.T., sulphuric acid, copper chloride and "the proprietary flame-throwing gun" that deal with insect pests and weeds in the author's nightmare world. The happy gardener, one feels, will follow Miss Jekyll's advice to emulate the cottage rather than the manor-house. The cottager knows what he wants to grow; gives it what it needs in the way of soil, aspect, company and treatment; and leaves both décor and diseases to the amateur of both. H. P. E.

Down West

In *The River Fowey* (CASSELL, 12/6), Mr. WILSON MACARTHUR traces the course of that small but lovable river, a bare thirty miles with all its twists and changes. For the earlier part of the book he is on or about Bodmin Moor. Up there he meets the true sons of the soil, small farm-dwellers and the like. He has the happy knack of making friends with them, and they take him on in their kindly, hospitable and humorous fashion. It is here that he learns of one Samp Wilson, blacksmith and tooth extractor. "He plants his knee on your chest and puts the great hook in your mouth and pulls—and pulls—and pulls." After its youthful gambollings down from the moor the river turns into the Glynn valley and becomes a mature and sedate stream, concerned more with places than individuals. It passes Restormel Castle, arrives at Lostwithiel, a small and ancient town that had much to do in the Civil War, and thence, becoming tidal, flows down that lovely estuary to finish its career at Fowey, the Troy Town of "Q." It has passed through beautiful scenery to end in a beautiful harbour, and we can share the author's delight in his many charming photographs. The book is to be strongly recommended, both to those who know that part of the world and those who don't. Some may regret the changes that are making Cornwall more and more a playground for the stranger. Not without a shudder they may learn of motor-coach loads of trippers picnicking at Dozmare Pool. J. K.



Sigh No More.

IT struck me forcibly the other day, while easing a foreign gentleman into a packed train in the rush hour, what a fillip to our morale all these Olympic visitors are bound to be. He fell out twice during the scuffle, but throughout he was lavish in praise of the old country, and even gasped an agonized "*Magnifique!*" as I slowly forced the door home on him. It was only when the porter had blown his whistle that I realized it was the wrong train. I appealed to him in dismay.

"Don't you draw me into it," he whimpered, recoiling a step. "The passengers do as they like now I've been nationalized."

"But that gentleman can scarcely speak a word of English," I protested.

"I daren't take him out now," he said, wringing his hands despondently. "If I opened that door I'd never get the others back. I don't know what the country's coming to!"

I leaped towards the moving train and hammered on the window, roughly where the foreign gentleman's features were flattened.

"*Revenez la gare prochaine!*" I cried.

Now when speaking French I get a very fluent adenoid effect, and this impressed the porter at once.

"Visitin' the country?" he sighed.

His eyes were round with that hurt, baffled expression, so rife nowadays, like a cluster of snook tins huddled on the top shelf of a grocer's shop, and I decided to practise a harmless deception on him. He was limp for lack of appreciation, the kindly word of praise and so forth.

"*Vraiment,*" I said, nodding affably and bowing from the hips. "Your country fills me with admiration."

"You speak English good," he observed suspiciously.

"I study him a long time," I beamed.

The astute use of the pronoun won him over. He cast a brooding eye on the wall-map.

"Seen St. Paul's?" he ventured with a diffident cough.

"*Magnifique!*" I cried. "So big—so round!"

His eyes shone with pleasure. We made dome motions together for a while until we got it about right.

"Your stations, too—so artistic," I continued, getting into my stride. "That white line, for instance, along the edge of the platform. Very fine."

"I painted it meself," he said with a radiant smile.

"Beautifully done! In the modern style, too. One senses a sort of dramatic vigour. I shouldn't be surprised if it was symbolic of something."

"I smudged it a bit over there," he murmured, eyeing it with some misgiving. "I'll touch it up in the morning."

"It hardly shows from here," I said. "The platform, too—so clean."

He glanced about happily—he was a different man. Then he spotted a small patch of dust. Blushing, he laid a stealthy boot upon it. His agitation was so embarrassing that I affected to examine a slot machine, whereat he did a little hurried and somewhat furtive sweeping and pattered back to my side. He ran a finger along the machine and held it out.

"Spotless," I nodded. "Marvellous contrivance, this."

"Before the war," he said proudly, "this 'ere machine yielded no less than three kinds of chocolate."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. After that you got matches and a cigarette just here, and then you finished off at the end with throat pastilles."

"Splendid idea!" I said. "But here, I think, is my train. Beautifully designed!"

"You ought to see 'em on a wet day," he cried, clasping his hands and hurrying along beside me. "All sparkling with rain, like—like fairyland."

"Very crowded though," I frowned.

"All this snarling and milling round the doors—"

"Leave it to me," he whispered,

cupping my ear with a hand that trembled with excitement. "I'll very likely get you a seat."

"A seat!—during the rush hour?"

"Ho, yes. Now you stand about here, and when I give the word you hop in while I fight the others off with this 'ere broom."

It worked very well—a corner seat too. When the tumult had died down I put my face to the window and he passed in my hat.

"Thank you," I cried. "I shall never forget your kindness!"

He was deeply moved. His Adam's apple hovered in silence and then dropped sheer into his collar. He cleared his throat.

"Seen our policemen?" he quavered at last.

He tried to speak casually, but I could tell by the way his foot rose in suspense what it meant to him.

"Wonderful!" I cried warmly.

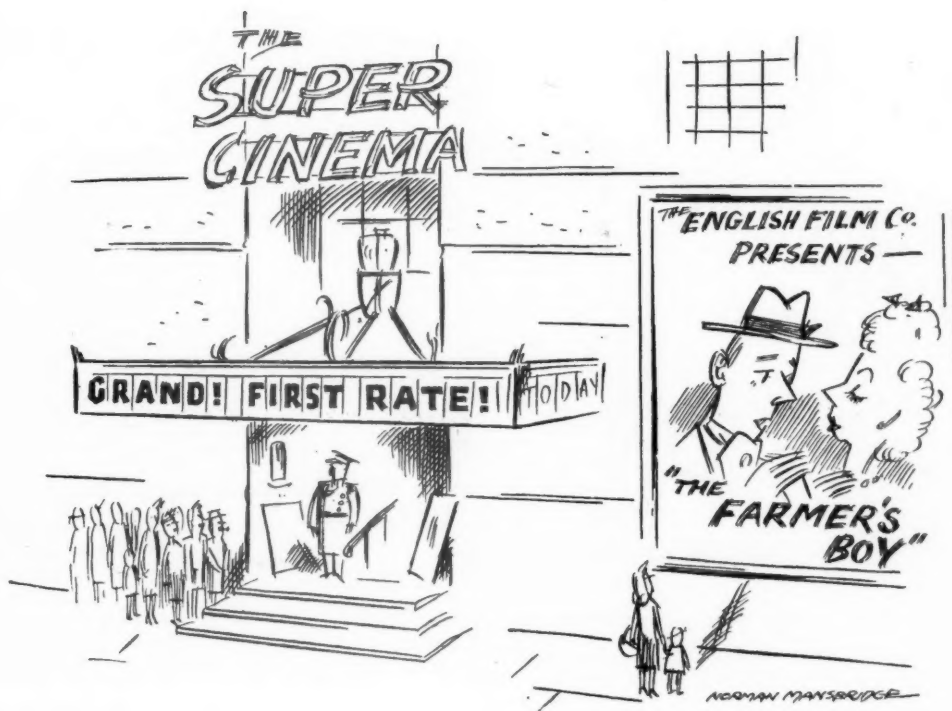
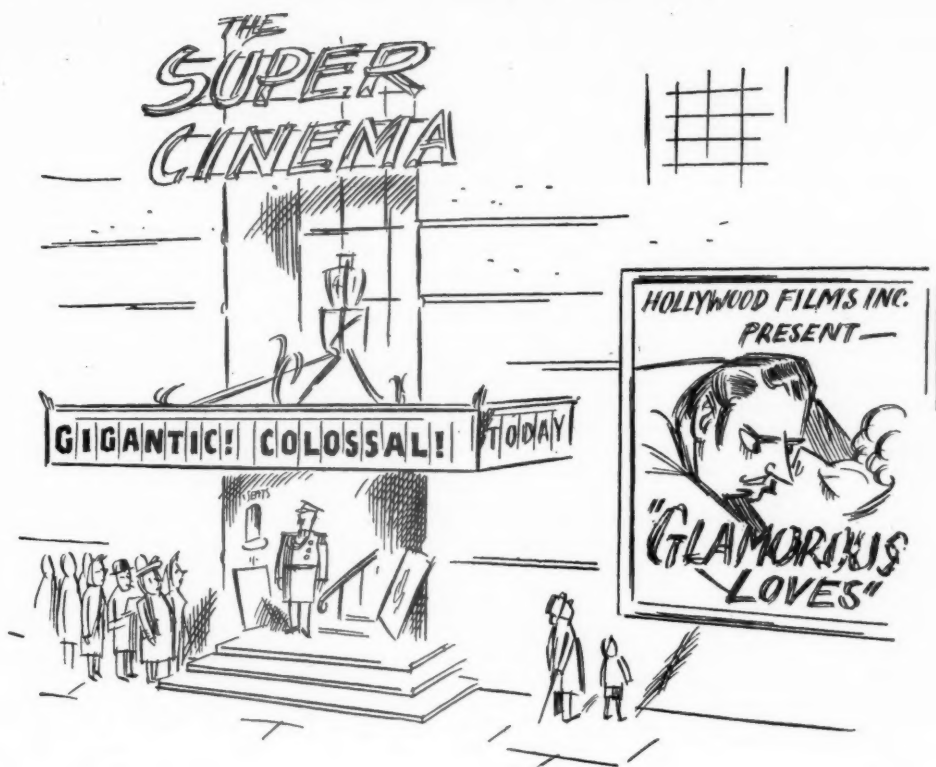
"Truly wonderful."

"Ta," he murmured in a husky voice.

I thought the experiment was, on the whole, well worth while. As the train moved out he drew himself up to the full height of his broom and waved an inarticulate farewell, his eyes brimming with tears. For a moment he fought manfully with his feelings, and then, as the guard at the rear of the train blew him a kiss in passing, he turned away and broke down completely.



"Next, please."



The Bos'n Hates Baboons.

OF the many stirring stories the sea has given us few, I feel, can match in stark drama the story that appeared a week or two ago on the front page of one of our "popular" newspapers: the story of the four-foot baboon which escaped from its cage on a liner bound from West Africa to Plymouth, bit the bos'n and scattered eighty-one passengers at tea before it was recaptured.

For the benefit of those who have never been shut up in a ship with eighty-one passengers—let alone with a four-foot baboon—I am taking it upon myself to paint a rather more detailed (but purely imaginary) picture of what an incident of this kind aboard ship must mean to those involved in it.

We may assume that the ship was steaming approximately due north. Of the state of the weather I cannot speak with any authority; it is usual before the occurrence of incidents of this sort for the barometer to drop sharply, although the presence of eighty-one passengers at tea would seem to indicate that the sea was fairly smooth. We can, however, be pretty certain that some forewarning of disaster, such as the appearance of an albatross in the third-class reading-room, had manifested itself earlier in the day.

On deck the unhurried rhythm of the ship's life would be proceeding normally. Underfoot, unless I am very much mistaken, the great heart of the vessel would be pulsing smoothly. Somewhere to loo'ard the bos'n would be engaged in his routine duties, running a finger along the garboard strake for

signs of dust, or parcelling a new grummet for the forthcoming deck-quoit finals.

He hears a soft padding of feet behind him. Thinking it is the captain he turns, his hand half-raised in a salute. The next moment he is locked in a death-struggle with a four-foot baboon. At first he imagines that this is merely horse-play on the part of one of the crew—probably Svenson, the big Swede, whom he has recently had occasion to reprimand for making an apple-pie bed for the purser. But he is quickly disillusioned when teeth that were never human sink into the fleshy part of his arm!

I think we can safely leave the bos'n to handle this while we go below and take a peek at the lounge. Unconscious of the horror that is loose in the ship, the eighty-one passengers are at tea. One of their number glances over towards the door, gives a rather shrill little laugh and says "Ah, a baboon!" This is greeted with general merriment, for is not the speaker the life and soul of the ship? Laughter turns to dismay, however, when a hairy hand reaches into one little group and starts filling the bos'n's cap with lump sugar. A woman screams. The string quartet, who have always hoped something like this would happen, go on playing as if nothing had. A man jumps on to the table and commands everybody to keep calm. Too late. He is alone. Alone, that is, except for a four-foot baboon.

If you don't mind, I think we'll go up on deck for a moment—it *was* getting a bit stuffy down there, wasn't

it? Here we witness heartening scenes of activity. All hands have been piped on deck and are being formed into punitive parties. The bos'n (doesn't he look young without his cap!) is issuing belaying pins all round. The women are magnificent, particularly that tall blonde in the two-piece sun-suit. Slowly the little bands of grim, tight-lipped men move off in the direction of the lounge.

I don't think there's any point in following them, do you? I mean, we'd only be in the way. Let's go and see how the bos'n's getting on.

Satisfied that the recapture of the baboon is now assured, the bos'n has gone below to have his wound dressed. "Why, Mr. Birtwhistle!" exclaims the fresh-faced young doctor. "What have you been up to?" "Nothing much," mumbles Birtwhistle; "only been bitten by a baboon." The fresh-faced young doctor shoots a significant glance over his gauze mask at an equally fresh-faced young nurse. She gestures towards a hypodermic syringe hanging in gimballs from the bulkhead. The doctor nods curtly. "Come and sit down, Mr. Birtwhistle," he says evenly. "We all get bitten by baboons from time to time." With deft fingers he rolls up the sleeve of the man's jersey. The hypodermic plunges home . . .

You must excuse me for a moment while I shut the window. My room overlooks the Zoo and there's a new baboon just arrived that *will* keep playing "I'll Make Up For Everything" on a bos'n's whistle. Quite infuriating.



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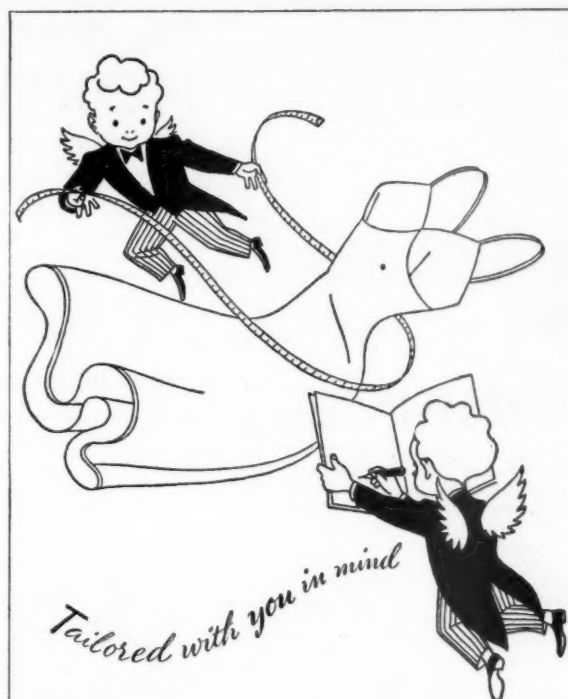
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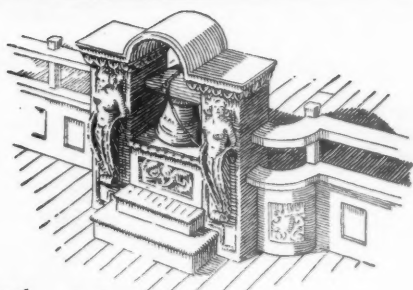
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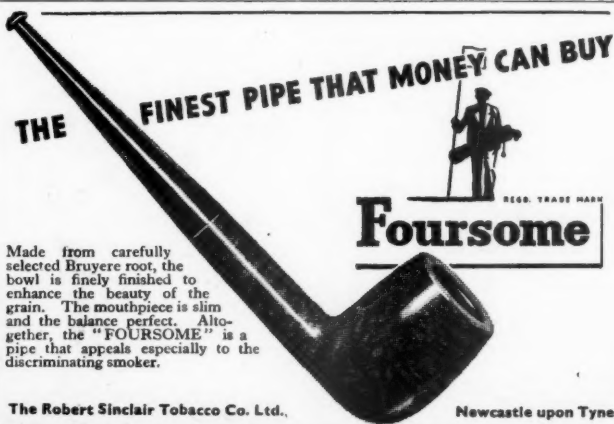
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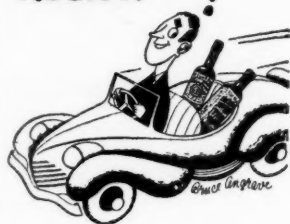


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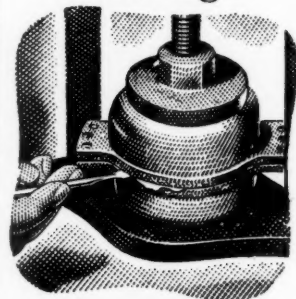
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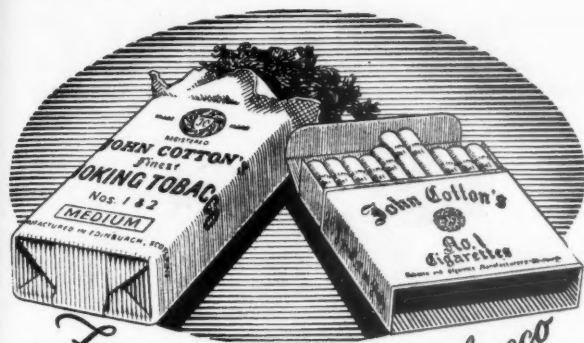
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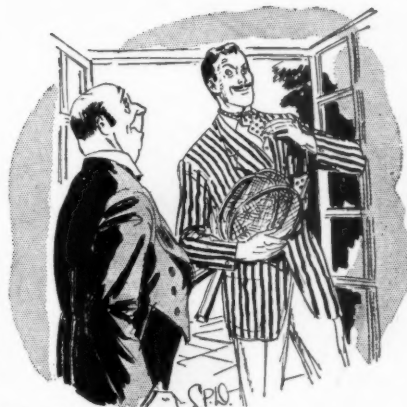
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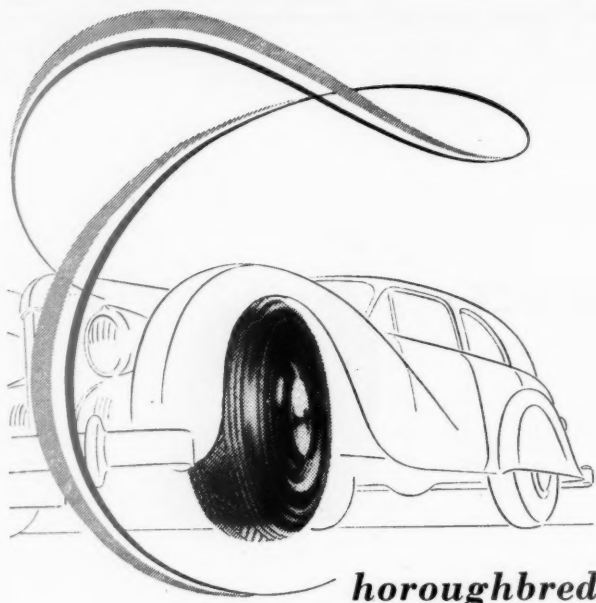
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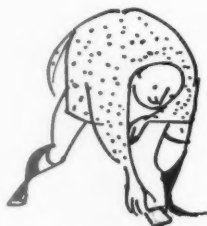
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